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# Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66624
DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:COVEY
APPROVED BY:S/S-O:JOHNSON
---------- 072938
R 221101Z NOV 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USSAG

S E C R E T STATE 257910

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOL VIETNAINE 8605 SENT ACTION SECSTATE NOV 22; REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 8605

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD AND USSAG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, LA
SUBJECT: MORALE AND DISCIPLINE IN FAR

REF: VIENTIANE 8487

1. I MET WITH GENERAL BOUNPONE MAKTHEPHARAKS, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, FAR, ON THE AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 20 TO REVIEW WITH HIM THE SITUATION WITHIN THE LAO ARMED FORCES.

2. VETERANS DEMONSTRATION. GENERAL BOUNPONE OPENED THE
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CONVERSATION BY DESCRIBING THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAD

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LED TO THE CANCELLATION OF A LARGE-SCALE DEMONSTRATION
BY WAR VETERANS ON NOVEMBER 18TH. HE SAID THAT THE FAR
STAFF UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP HAD CONTACTED THE LEADERS OF
THE VETERANS MOVEMENT AND HAD POINTED OUT THAT ANY
DEMONSTRATION WOULD PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE PATHET
LAO. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT NO FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS
WERE LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
I SAID I WAS PLEASED WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS
PROBLEM HAD BEEN RESOLVED BUT THAT THE BASIC PROBLEM
OF THE WELFARE OF VETERANS HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED.

3. DEMOBILIZATION. I POINTED OUT TO BOUNPONE THAT
IT APPEARED TO ME THAT FAR WAS LAGGING IN CARRYING
OUT ITS PLANNED DEMOBILIZATION AND THAT ARRANGEMENTS
FOR BONUSES OR OTHER VETERANS BENEFITS WERE FAR FROM
CLEAR. AT VARIOUS MEETINGS WITH DEFENSE MINISTER
SISOUK AND SENIOR OFFICERS OF FAR, THIS SUBJECT
HAD BEEN EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED BUT VERY LITTLE HAD
ACTUALLY BEEN DONE. THE FAR STAFF ALLUDED TO THE
EXISTENCE OF CROWN LANDS WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAIL-
ABLE TO VETERANS BUT MY EFFORTS TO DETERMINE WHAT
AMERICAN ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL
VETERANS ON THESE LANDS HAVE BEEN UNAVAILING.
BOUNPONE REPLIED THAT HE RECOGNIZED THAT MORE STAFF
WORK WAS REQUIRED BUT IT WAS VERY HARD FOR HIM TO
GET HIS SUBORDINATES TO PAY ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF
THIS KIND.

4. SUPPORT. I EXPRESSED TO BOUNPONE AS I HAD TO
KOUPRASITH MY VIEW THAT ALTHOUGH U.S. POLICY HAD NOT
CHANGED, THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING U.S. ASSISTANCE
TO FAR WERE AFFECTED BY PRESENT-DAY POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC REALITIES. FOR THIS REASON, GENERAL
TREFRY ANFVXLAVE BP SEEKING TO BRING ABOUT VARIOUS
ECONOMIES. I THEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE UNHAPPY
POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF CORRUPTION WITHIN FAR AND
OF SUCH EPISODES AS THE SEIZURE IN THAILAND OF WEAPONS
WHICH COULD BE TRACED TO FAR ARSENALS. BOUNPONE SAID
HE UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION PERFECTLY AND THAT HE WAS
DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH FIRM DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE
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ARMY. HE HAD ALREADY TAKEN SEVERE STEPS TO PUNISH
THOSE GUILTY OF TRAFFICKING IN ARMS. I SAID THAT WE
HAD NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE PUNISHMENTS WHICH HAD
BEEN METED OUT AND I WOULD APPRECIATE HIS LETTING ME
KNOW WHAT HAD BEEN DONE SO THAT THE STEPS TAKEN BY
FAR COULD BE MADE KNOWN TO WASHINGTON. BOUNPONE
AGREED THAT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA.

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5. DISCIPLINE AND MORALE. BOUNPONE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE BORE THE TITLE OF COMMANDER IN CHIEF, HE WAS HAMSTRUNG BY THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED ON HIM BY VARIOUS POLITICIANS AND BY SOME OF HIS SUBORDINATES. GENERAL KOUPRASITH AND GENERAL OUDONE SANANIKONE WERE ALWAYS INTRIGUING TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THEIR SUBORDINATES AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO CLEAN HOUSE WHEN SO MANY POLITICAL INFLUENCES WERE ZXOUGHT TO BEAR ON TRANSFERS AND RETIREMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, HIS ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE GENERAL SOUTCHAY FROM MR IV AND REPLACE HIM WITH GENERAL PHASOUK HAD BEEN THWARTED BY KOUPRASITH AND THE PRIME MINISTER. I SUVO THAT I WISHED TO BE CANDID WITH BOUNPONE AND THAT THE ASSIGNMENT OF PHASOUK TO MR IV, WHERE HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE SO WIDELY KNOWN TO BE INVOLVED IN CORRUPT PRACTICES, APPEARED TO ME TO BE EXTREMELY ILL-ADVISED. IN MY VIEW PRESSURE WAS MOUNTING WITHIN THE ARMY FOR A SWEEPING CORRECTION OF PRESENT DAY ABUSES. BOUNPONE REPLIED THAT HE AGREED BUT COMMENTED THAT LITTLE COULD BE DONE. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING THE ACTIONS WHICH OFFICERS WHO WERE FORCED INTO RETIREMENT MIGHT TAKE. IN A PROLONGED DISCUSSION OF THIS TOPIC, I COULD ONLY MAKE OUT THAT BOUNPONE FEARED VAGUE "INTRIGUES AND PRESSURES." MY EFFORTS TO PERSUADE HIM THAT THESE OFFICERS WOULD NOT PRESENT A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE VIENTIANE SIDE WENT UNHEEDED.

6. COMMENT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO KEEP GENERAL BOUNPONE FOCUSSED ON A PARTICULAR PROBLEM AND HIS ABILITY TO DIGRESS AND REMINISCE IS REMARKABLE. HE OBVIOUSLY UNDERSTANDS THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG BUT HAS NEITHER THE ABILITY NOR DETERMINATION TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION. RECOGNIZING THAT THIS





CONTINUES TO BE A QUIXOTIC EXERCISE, I PLAN TO PURSUE THIS TOPIC FURTHER WITH SISOUK WHEN HE RETURNS. WHITEHOUSE UNQUOTE INGERSOLL



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# Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** MARR, LA
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